

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CU-02 /082 W

-----092151Z 112848 /64

R 091641Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5693

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 0557

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ML, FR

SUBJECT: GISCARD'S PROSPECTIVE VISIT TO MALI

1. FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING IS SCHEDULED TO  
PAY STATE VISIT TO MALI FEBRUARY 13 TO 15. HIS VISIT  
WILL BE FIRST OF ANY FRENCH CHIEF OF STATE TO THIS FORMER  
FRENCH COLONY SINCE INDEPENDENCE AND IS OF MAJOR SYMBOLIC  
IMPORTANCE. UPON ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1960,  
MALI CHOSE TO STEER PATH SOMEWHERE BETWEEN FORMER  
COLONIES LIKE SENEGAL AND IVORY COAST THAT REMAINED  
CLOSE TO FRANCE AND, ON OTHER HAND, GUINEA, WHICH BROKE  
OPENLY WITH FORMER METROPOLE. MALI PARED FRENCH  
PRESENCE AFTER 1960, CUT LINK WITH FRENCH FRANC, AND TOOK  
RADICAL POLITICAL LINE, BUT IT RETAINED KEY ECONOMIC TIES.  
FRANCE TODAY IS SINGLE LARGEST AID DONOR, PROVIDING ABOUT  
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\$75 MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY, AND MALI FRANC HAS FOR LAST  
EIGHT YEARS AGAIN BEEN TIED TO FRENCH FRANC.

2. IN 17 YEARS SINCE INDEPENDENCE, MALI HAS MOVED  
SLOWLY FROM ULTRA-RADICAL POSITIONS TOWARD MORE PRAGMATIC  
NON-ALIGNED STANCE. ALL FOREIGN INVESTMENT IS WELCOMED.  
SOVIET INFLUENCE TODAY IS BASED LARGELY ON USSR'S WILLINGNESS

TO PROVIDE ARMS MALI'S LEADERS BELIEVE THEY NEED. AS MALIANS PONDER THEIR FUTURE AND THEIR ABSOLUTE NEED OF OUTSIDE AID, THEY SEE THAT SUCH AID CAN COME ONLY FROM WEST. FOREIGN MINISTER CISSOKO'S RECENT TOUR OF EASTERN EUROPEAN CAPITALS (EXCEPT MOSCOW) FAILED, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, TO GENERATE THE SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC AID THAT HE SOUGHT. A MALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL COMMENTED RUEFULLY THAT SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER HAD BEEN "UNAVAILABLE" DURING CISSOKO'S 15 DAYS IN EASTERN EUROPE.

3. GISCARD'S VISIT THEREFORE IS SYMBOL OF IMPORTANCE OF FRENCH, AND WESTERN, INFLUENCE IN MALI. MASSIVE CLEAN-UP AND REPAINTING OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BUILDINGS IN BAMAKO AND REPAVING OF MAIN STREETS ARE CLEAR SIGNALS TO MALIAN CITIZENS.

4. BEHIND SCENES THERE IS CONTINUING TALK OF CABINET RESHUFFLE, INCLUDING REPLACEMENT OF FOREIGN MINISTER. A SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD US BLUNTLY THAT CISSOKO WAS TOO CLOSE TO THE EAST AND DID NOT APPRECIATE WHAT UNITED STATES AND WEST COULD DO FOR MALI. TWO NAMES MENTIONED AS SUCCESSORS ARE VICE PRESIDENT BABA DIARRA, WHO WOULD BE EXCELLENT CHOICE, AND MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS KARIM DEMBELE, WHO SEEMS LESS IDEOLOGICAL THAN CISSOKO, BUT SOMETHING OF A PLAYBOY.

5. ON DARK SIDE, FRENCH AMBASSADOR TOLD US FEBRUARY 7 THAT MALIAN STUDENTS WERE ORGANIZING DEMONSTRATIONS TO TAKE PLACE DURING GISCARD VISIT IN ORDER PROTEST STIFFER  
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MALIAN EDUCATION STANDARDS WHICH WOULD HAVE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF WINNOWING DOWN NUMBER OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR ADVANCED STUDY. SECURITY CHIEF BAGAYOKO HAD, SAID MAZEY-RAC, ALREADY THREATENED STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS IN HARSH TERMS AND WARNED THEM NOT TO DEMONSTRATE. MAZEY-RAC'S STATEMENTS WERE CONFIRMED BY DIFFERENT SOURCE WHO WORKS REGULARLY WITH MALIAN STUDENTS.

6. COMMENT: U.S. INTERESTS IN MALI SHOULD BE BOLSTERED BY FRENCH PRESIDENT'S VISIT SINCE BOTH COUNTRIES SEEK TO LIMIT SOVIET INFLUENCE AND TO PROMOTE MALI'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG LINES COMPATIBLE WITH MODERATE DEMOCRATIC VALUES.  
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## Message Attributes

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